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John Kean to Susan Kean, April 19, 1787

John Kean

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Braufort April 19th 1787.

Come my love let us through the medium of our eyes hold sweet converse together - let us greet each other with fond gratulations & in imagination imprint the warm kiss of mutual affection - for though distant be our bodies our minds are ever near & it is said that by sympathy & imagination joys may be felt and happiness enjoyed equal to fruition - I feel a great pleasure when I think on you & paint you to my fond mind enjoying ease & quiet - but yet I conceive that was I with you I should be more happy for my Susan would be more happy also - then would her fears cease and her anxious apprehensions have an end - thank heaven the time will soon elapse, I have gained the summit & begin to descend to the day of my departure - more than half my exile is at an end - The truly religious (whether male or female) whose only happiness depends on the life to come in sure & certain hope of enjoying uninterrupted felicity, longs not more ardently for the consummation of the bliss, than I do to be with you in New York, great is the sacrifice that I make to preserve a remnant of life - but it is for my Susans sake & I will guard

with more care than was the Hesperian fruit—
Health which to me has played the part of a coy mistress
or indeed I might have said a cruel one, begins to relent &
shews an inclination towards me, she smiles upon me
not with all the force of her unbounded charms, but
with that countenance that declares, if you persevere
and assiduously follow the course you have done, you
may hope every thing & time will bless you with
full enjoyment—

My affair with madam Health puts me
in mind of some others I have seen & heard of in this
world, where the Lady has had no inclination in the
beginning, but at length has ended as I hope mine will
in an indissoluble union— don't be jealous for be
assured the closer this union is cemented the more
happy will you be & it is the only instance in
which a connection with another female can tend
to the happiness of a mans better part— for these
good reasons I flatter myself you will pardon my
first indiscretion, upon my promise of never having
an affair of gallantry with any other lady but this
Madam Hygea—

The Pride of India being a Tree much
spoke of in your part of the world— I anticipate
your view of it in its natural state (which ~~is~~

to be sure is the most pleasing by sending you a small branch
of the leaves & flower - it will give you but a faint idea of
the beauty of the tree - your own view is the only thing
that will give you satisfaction in this point - but that
you may have some idea of it I will give you two
or three traits of it - imagine then a tree full as
~~large~~^{tall} as the very largest of your apple trees, with
limbs as widely extended - cover it over with blossoms
such as I send you, interspersed with the dark green
leaves which forms a pleasing contrast - then add an
agreeable scent that spreads to a considerable distance,
& you will form an idea of this beautiful tree, but
alas! of how little continuance is earthly beauty, old
age to natural beauty is not more destructive than
winter is to this tree, which then becomes as perfectly
ugly as it is now beautiful, but it has this advan-
=tage over natural beauties that every spring it resumes
again its wonted splendour while theirs once gone is
gone for ever - and the Tree has another advantage
when it grows old it makes excellent fire wood,
now I know nothing that old people are valuable
for but the good they have done while they were
young, therefore let us stamp some value upon
ourselves before we grow old -

All the merchants whom I left here except one have shut up shop - this one like all monopolizers has an enormous price for his goods & keeps a very bad assortment of the articles you gave me a memorandum he has not one - we must get them in New York.

From the 16th to this day we have had a spell of cold, raw, easterly wind & disagreeable weather unfriendly to the delicate constitutions & of course bitter enemies to us, but it has been an opportunity for me to judge how much I have really recovered, when I first arrived we had much such another spell - it then returned the pain in my breast upon me as violently as ever, my appetite was injured, I coughed much & my rest was broken, but at this time it neither returned the pain in the breast, or injured my rest or appetite nor was my cough increased, all the ill consequences that I felt was a considerable heaviness, depression of spirits & lassitude - no doubt it retarded my progress & hindered my gaining a quantity of strength which I conceive I do every fine clear day - I can now ride six or eight miles without feeling the least fatigued & on Monday mean to commence an excursion to the plantations which I have not yet done - thinking it more prudent to wait and try my strength gradually, than by over rating it fatigue myself & injure my health -